



SPOKE 'N' WORD

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE VELOTEERS BICYCLE CLUB

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"I'm now at the age where I've got to prove that I'm just as good as I never was.."

- Rex Harrison

Mellow out, ride LSD

WRITTEN BY NICK SULLIVAN

Nancy Andrews believes bicycle riding should be a mellow experience.

Andrews, a mother, occasional triathlete and longtime bicycle rider, likes nothing better than a good, long bicycle ride.

"I just don't like to ride fast," says Andrews. "I don't like to ride at a pace where I feel like my heart is about to jump out of my chest."

This desire led Andrews to form a riding group last spring as part of the Veloteers weekly Saturday morning ride devoted to LSD – long, slow, distance rides.

"I think the club had kind of gotten away from this type of riding," she said. "We have what

I call 'hammerheads', who like to go all out, and beginners' rides,

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Which are shorter rides. I think this was discouraging a lot of riders from coming out to ride with the group because they couldn't keep up with the faster group but still wanted to get in a good ride."

What Nancy did with her group was to ride the same distance as the regular group, but at a much slower pace.

The group would meet every other Saturday with the rest of the

club at the Music City Star station in Mt. Juliet, but then go its own way.

"We usually had a 40-mile route mapped out, but we would let the fast riders get off first and after the dust had settled we'd start out at a more moderate pace," she said. "We did this because there is a tendency if you leave with the rest of the group to want to keep up.

"While the others are doing a 16-18-mile pace, we are riding at a moderate pace, like 13-15 mile-per-hour. Our pace depends a lot on who shows up and how hot it is, but it is a moderate pace to ride; a more touring-type pace.

"There is a lot more conversation and you're not as tired at the end of the ride," Andrews said. "It is a lot mellow kind of ride."

Andrews got into riding about 17 or 18 years ago with her husband, Scott. She dropped out for several years after work and family pressures forced her to put up the bike. She took up running but eventually got back on the bike about five years ago to take breaks from the pounding running was doing to her legs. She now does both, even competing in a couple of triathlons a year.

While the first season of Andrews' LSD rides with the Veloteers didn't draw large groups – five or six at the most – she believes it has the potential for growth.

She thinks it is a good place for more ambitious riders to start before moving on to the faster pack. And, she doesn't discourage beginners, either.

"I have a soft spot in my heart for beginners who are looking for a way to get back in shape, because I've struggled with weight issues myself at times.

"I know it's sometimes intimidating to show up for a ride and feel like you're the only one out there who is out of shape and can't keep up. I hope that this type of ride will encourage people who want to get in shape to come out and ride and enjoy an active lifestyle," she said, adding that her ride can be adjusted to accommodate beginners.

"We're not locked into the 40-mile ride," she said. "Depending on who shows up and the desires of the group, we can make it shorter."

She also believes the Veloteers will benefit from the LSD rides when they resume next spring.

"I believe if we get the word out that we now have a more moderate paced ride, it will help the club grow," she said.



VELO GEARS

WRITTEN BY TIM COBLE

Rust....

So, you know that guy at work who drives you completely nuts? Yep, him. He's the person with the uncanny knack for making every interaction as difficult and unpleasant as possible. Ask him to do something and he'll spend twice as much time and effort as it would take to complete the job to explain how he doesn't have the time.

Every office has one of these guys, but few put their heart into the role as completely as my guy. Let's call him Steve.

Personality-wise, Steve's the human equivalent of riding up a hill in pouring rain and forty-degree temperatures. I should have known something bad was about to happen when he appeared in my doorway with a forced, unpracticed approximation of a smile on his face. "I've got this old bike..." he began. I confess that the first image to come to mind was of him snatching it from some poor neighborhood kid who rode it too close to his driveway. Then using it to run over puppies.

"I haven't ridden it in a while", he continued, (big surprise there) "but I'm thinking about getting it cleaned up so that I can get some exercise."

Like in the seconds just before a car accident, I simultaneously realized what was coming and accepted that it was unavoidable. I had restored bikes for several other people in his department and word had made its way to Steve that I was the office "bike guy".

Veloteers set Christmas party

The Veloteers will hold its annual Christmas Party on Dec. 6 at 1099 Riverside Drive in Old Hickory.

Social hour is at 6 p.m. and dinner is served at 7. RSVP by Dec. 2 to Dustin Gill at funstuff@veloteers.org. No alcoholic beverages are permitted.

Mingling with your cycling friends and discussing the season past and the good food make for a very warm and festive evening. Friends and family are invited. So, come out and enjoy the party. Bring a dessert.

At that point my better self should have taken over and all of the arguments I've made a thousand times about the importance of getting people onto bikes should have been ample motivation to do the right thing. But the truth is that the only reason the words "Sure, I'd be glad to fix her up for you" came out of my mouth was that it was the only way I was going to get Steve out of my office – something that seemed more important with every second that ticked by.

Later that week, an old Trek mountain bike appeared next to Steve's desk. What had, at some time in the mid-90s, been a fairly nice trail bike, now stood half-hidden in shadow, as if ashamed to be seen in such a sad state. This was obviously the first time it had been indoors in years and the mud that caked its frame and tires had long since turned from a pleasant reminder of the last trip to the woods to an indictment of neglect and abandonment. Mustering as little small talk with Steve as possible, I made my way

back to my office with the bike, knowing that I couldn't promise it a brighter future but determined to provide a few days of TLC.

Some of the bike's problems were obvious at first glance. The chain was now a stiff, brown loop of rust, and it was difficult to tell where the mud that caked the tires ended and the rotting rubber began.

Other problems were less evident, but not surprising. What had once been protective grease in the hubs, bottom bracket and headset now had the dry, caked consistency of mummified remains. Cables were rusted, shifters were frozen and, most telling, a thorough cleaning of the frame revealed an angry gouge running almost the full length of the chain stay, left by a thrown chain and a rider without enough sense to stop pedaling. I had worked on worse, more neglected bikes – but not many.

Fixing bikes has always been therapeutic for me, and I usually come away feeling as if I've gotten as much out of the process as the bike did. There's something about taking apart something that doesn't work right, cleaning it, replacing parts that are too far gone, putting it back together and adjusting everything *just so*.

If I can take a bike that's old, worn or neglected and make it run as smoothly and reliably as it did when it was new, I come away with just a little more belief in second chances. And the further gone a bike is, the more I can believe in redemption when I see it standing in front of me, thousands of miles left before it's done. That's what I'll be telling myself as I head out to the garage to finish Steve's bike.

When I roll it into his office, I'll know that it's not going to magically transform him into a cheerful, helpful ray of sunshine.

Odds are that even if he starts riding a bike he'll still be "That Guy".

But maybe second chances are contagious. Maybe sometimes rust is only on the surface. Maybe the difference between being ready for the scrap heap and being reborn is a little time, effort and the benefit of the doubt. Maybe...



ON THE ROAD

COMPILED BY NICK SULLIVAN

We're still the one and only Veloteers, so it seems.

Back in the spring, the name "Veloteers" was among the finalists for the new name for a Washington, D.C.-area bicycle club. Other finalists were 'VeloDCity (the original name)', 'VeloCats', 'Velo Underground', 'the Flat Earth Society', 'Windbreakers', 'Shifters', 'Cycledelics', and 'the Crankers'.

"The name (Veloteers) conjures up images from the 50's pulp fiction inspired 'Rocketeer' movie and comics," wrote a cyclist named Greg on the club's message board.

Greg was the cyclist who nominated Veloteers for the name.

There was no indication that he was aware of our club's existence.

According to the club's Website <http://bike.meetup.com/133/>, the club apparently decided to stay with the original name VeloDCity, as the group is now



– Photo by Nick Sullivan

ALL OURS – The new bridge on Lebanon Road over the Stones Rivers is now open to traffic, leaving the old span, here, to Metro to convert into the final link to the Stones River Greenway. When? Stay tuned.

in the process of taking orders for jerseys, which has VeloDCity on it. No clue whatsoever what that means, perhaps Velo-the-City?

Whatever, the club, which was founded in 2006, is boasting over 900 members and lots of rides.

Travers shines in Clarksville

Beth Travers was the first female finisher at the Clarksville Century.

Travers' time was 4:33:07 and that put her in 40th place overall, averaging 22mph. Beating a bunch of guys!

Clarksville used electronic chips to provide automatic electronic timing of the event. So these are exact results. The clock starts when you cross the starting line and stops when you cross the finish line.





Team in training seeks athletes

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Team in Training is recruiting athletes for participation in the following events:

Country Music Marathon and Half Marathon;

3 State 3 Mountain Cycle Ride;

And, Gulf Coast Half Ironman Triathlon.

It's part of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's program of "saving lives one mile at a time."

For more information call 615-331-2980 or go to www.teamintraining.org/tn



From the Editor ...

Do you have content for the Veloteers newsletter? Please continue to submit your stories, photos and items of interest as Word documents or jpg files nickbiker1@aol.com for future publication.

